



Republic of Korea

Enjoy Korean holidays

New Year is recognized and celebrated and family ties are reaffirmed on *Folklore Day*: New Year's Day on the lunar calendar, (Jan. 29).

Independence Movement Day: Koreans observe the anniversary of the 1919 Independence Movement against the colonial Japanese rule, featuring an annual reading of the Korean Proclamation of Independence, (March 1).

Arbor Day: Trees are planted all across the country as part of the nation's vast reforestation program, (April 5).

Children's Day: This day is celebrated with various programs for children. Parks and children's centers are packed during this holiday, (May 5).

Buddha's Birthday: This "Feast of the Lanterns" day is celebrated in honor of the birthday of Buddha.

Elaborate and solemn rituals are held at many Buddhist temples across the country while lanterns are displayed in the temple courtyards, (8th day of the 4th lunar month)

Memorial Day: On this day the nation pays tribute to the war dead and memorial services are held at the national cemeteries, (June 6).

Constitution Day: This holiday commemorates the proclamation of the Republic of Korea's constitution on July 17, 1948, (July 17).

Liberation Day: This national holiday commemorates the Japanese acceptance of the Allied terms of surrender in 1945, thereby freeing Korea from Japanese domination; and also marks the formal proclamation of the Republic of Korea in 1948, (Aug. 15).

Armed Forces Day: Colorful military parades, honor guard ceremonies and other such martial activities take place at the Youido Plaza in Seoul, (Oct. 1).

National Foundation Day: This holiday commemorates the day when the legendary founder of the Korean nation, Tangun, established his kingdom of ancient Chosun in 2333 B.C., (Oct. 3).

Ch'usok: This is referred to as the Korean Thanksgiving Day. People visit family tombs and make food offerings to their ancestors, (15th day of the 8th lunar month).

Korean Alphabet Day: This holiday celebrates the anniversary of the creation of



Hangul, the national written script of Korea, invented under King Sejong in the mid-15th Century, (Oct. 9).

Christmas: Christmas is observed as a national holiday in Korea as it is in Western countries, (Dec. 25).



Helpful Hangul phrases

Greetings

How do you do?Ch'o-um poep-gessoyo.
Good morning.....Annyong haseyo.
Good afternoon
Good evening
I'm glad to meet you.....Mannaso pan-gawoyo.
May I have your name?.....Irumi muo-shim-nigga?
My name is...Na-ui irumun...imnida
See you again.....Tah mannayo.
Good-bye (when you leave).....Annyonghi **kaseyo**
Good-bye (when you stay).....Annyonghi**keiseyo**

Others

Yes.....Neh or Ye.
No.....Anio.
Thank you,.....Kamsa-hamnida.
You are welcome.....Chon-manne-yo.
Excuse me.....Shille-hamnida.
I'm sorry.....Mian-hamnida.
Never mind.....Kokchong-maseyo.
That is good.....Chosumnida.
That is bad.....Nappumnida.
This is right (wrong).....Olssum-nida. (Tullyot-sumnida.)
Can you speak English?..... Yong-o hashim -nigga?
Do you understand me?I-hae-haseyo?
I beg your pardon?.....Tashi malssum-hae chuseyo.

Please help me.Towa-juseyo.
Just a moment please.....Cham-kon-man-yo
Come this way..... Iri oseyo.
You are pretty.....Tangshinin yeppum-nida.
I like you.....Tangshinul choa hamnida.
May I smoke?.....Dahm-beh pee-wodoh den knee-gga?

Transportation

Please take me to ?????? ro kap-shida
Here is the address.....Yogi chusoga
issumnida.
Stop here.....Sewo-juseyo.
How much?.....Olma im-nigga?
Please take me to.....Kah-kah-woon
the nearest U.S.mee-koon-boo-dae-ro
military installationkah-shi-dah.

Asking the way

Hello (telephone).....Yoboseyo.
What is this place called?.....Yoginun odim-nigga?
What is that?.....Chogosun muo-shim-nigga?
Would you show me
the way to ??.....??un odiro gam-nigga?



The land of the morning calm

National flag

The Korean flag, *Taegukki*, symbolized much of the thought, philosophy and mysticism of the Orient. The red and blue sections of the circle, in perfect balance, represent the *yang* and the *yin*, an ancient symbol of the universe originating in China.

These two opposites express the dualism of the cosmos: fire and water, day and night, male and female. The three bars at each corner also carry the ideas of opposition and balance: the three unbroken bars stand for heaven while the opposite three broken bars represent earth; the two bars with a broken bar in between symbolize fire while the opposite is the symbol of water.

The land

The Korean peninsula lies directly between China and Japan, extending southeasterly from the continent. Korea is roughly 622 miles long and only 134 miles wide at its narrowest point.

The peninsula is one of the world's most mountainous regions. Only 20 percent of the country is flat. The peninsula is separated from China in the northwest by the Yalu River, from the Soviet Union in the northeast by the Tuman River and from Japan by the East Sea.

On the peninsula, the Republic of Korea, to the south, and North Korea coexist and are separated by the Demilitarized Zone at the 38th parallel. The Republic of Korea is somewhat smaller in land area: 38,276 square miles compared to 47,268 in the north. South Korea's population of 42 million is about twice that of the north.

Customs

The Korean way of determining one's age and celebrating birthdays is very

different from the Western ways. Koreans are considered to be one year of age the day they are born. And because Koreans just count the New Year's Day as the standard of adding age, every January 1, adds one more year to one's age. Anyone who is 60 on December 31 is 61 on January 1.

The most important birthday is the 60th, called *hwan-gap*. The life cycle of Koreans is divided into the Chinese 12-year pattern. Every fifth cycle makes one *gap*. So, the 60th birthday is the day which makes one *gap* from one's birth.

Family names are limited in Korea and respect for lineage is powerful. There are only about 274 surnames, with *Kim*, *Lee* and *Park* among the most common.

Families maintain careful records of their ancestry which are important in marriage, school entrance and job applications. Women do not change their surnames when they marry, so that *Mr. Park's* wife may well be referred to as *Mrs. Lee*, using her original family name, *Lee*.

Koreans, like the Chinese, give their surnames first. For example, Korea's president, *Roh Moo-hyun*, is *President Roh*, not *President Moo-hyun* as he has been mistakenly called in some Western newspapers and magazines.

Finally, if you still have doubts about some things, don't be afraid, but go ahead and just ask.

